



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/703,264	10/31/2000	James C.H. Thi	2875.0490001	9016

26111 7590 08/29/2006

STERNE, KESSLER, GOLDSTEIN & FOX PLLC
1100 NEW YORK AVENUE, N.W.
WASHINGTON, DC 20005

EXAMINER

JAMAL, ALEXANDER

ART UNIT PAPER NUMBER

2614

DATE MAILED: 08/29/2006

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/703,264

Applicant(s)

THI ET AL.

Examiner

Alexander Jamal

Art Unit

2614

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 13 June 2006.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-39 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152) |
| 3) <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____ | 6) <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

DETAILED ACTION

Response to Amendment

1. Based upon the submitted amendment (2-3-2006) entered via RCE, the examiner notes that claims 1,11,22,33,37 have been amended.
2. Examiner notes that applicant's use of the term 'echo' as applied to the signal coupling between the (Fig. 7) audio source 326 and microphone 330 is read as a 'near-end noise source' by the examiner. The audio signal is not 'echoing' back towards the far end (Sout) because it does not originate from the far end (Fin). It is an audible noise source present at the near end that does not originate from the Far end system to which the near end device is communicating with.
3. Examiner notes that it is not common for a terminal with a speaker and microphone (such as a speakerphone) to also have a traditional 2wire-4wire hybrid at the **same** end as the speaker and microphone are located (as shown in applicant's figure 7). Examiner requests applicant to clarify the electrical echo formed by a 'hybrid' at the same end as an outputting speaker and an inputting microphone. For the purposes of examination, the examiner reads the 'Hybrid H' in Fig. 7 of applicant's specification to mean any electrical means (such as parasitic capacitances between circuit components ect.) that couple an unwanted portion of the signal $V(n)$ into the near end signal received from microphone 330.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. **Claims 1-3,6,8-12,14,15,17-20,22,23,25,27-31,33,36,37** are rejected under 35

U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Eppler Jr. et al (5600714), and further in view of Finn (5706344).

As per **claim 1**, Eppler discloses an echo canceller (in a communications system) comprising a single adaptive filter 24 with a single transfer function formed with coefficients and adapted to cancel an echo in a near end signal (from microphone 12 in Fig. 1). The echo comprises part of a far end signal (signal from telephone system 34 in Fig. 1) (ABSTRACT). Examiner notes that Room acoustic echo canceller 24 will function to cancel any acoustic echo coupled from speaker 58 to microphone 12 as well as any electrical echo caused by a hybrid (examiner notes the reading of the term 'hybrid' mentioned above). The function of the echo canceller is to reduce any unwanted portion of the far end signal from the near end signal (from microphone 12). The echo canceller functions by reducing an error term to it's minimum value (Col 6 line 50 to Col 7 line 16). By reducing the error term to it's minimum value, the echo canceller will take into account any echo that is received by the near end signal (whether it is from acoustic coupling or some sort of 'hybrid' between the near-end and far-end paths). The echoes

are modeled in parallel (via the series of delay line taps (Fig. 2)) and then simultaneously sent to summer 44 (Fig. 2). Since the echo canceller functions to drive the error signal to zero, it will take into account any effect the far end signal has on the near end signal (via acoustic echo or electrical parasitic echo). However, Eppler does not disclose that the echo comprises a portion of a secondary audio signal that at least contributes to the acoustic echo that the echo canceller cancels.

Finn teaches that in echo canceller systems, a far end signal (voice) and a secondary audio signal may be combined and output to the near end speaker and also output to an adaptive echo canceller in order to reduce the echo that both the voice and secondary audio signal produce in the near end microphone. Finn further teaches the means to combine the primary and secondary signals into a reference signal that is adaptively filtered, and then subtracted from the near end signal (FINN: Col 1 lines 23-44). Examiner notes that the combined far end-secondary audio signal will cause an acoustic echo as well as a hybrid electrical echo caused by any parasitic coupling between the transmit and receive paths. It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of this application that a secondary audio signal could be summed with the far end voice signal and the combination sent to the echo canceller (as well as the near end loudspeaker) in order to help remove the echo created in the near end microphone by both signals.

As per **claims 11,22** claims are rejected for the same reasons as claim 1

As per **claim 33**, claim 33 is rejected for the same reasons as claim 1 and the additional teachings from Finn that the primary and secondary signals are combined into a reference signal that is adaptively filtered, and then subtracted from the near end signal (FINN: Col 1 lines 23-44). Both Finn and Eppler disclose single filters implementing single adaptable transfer functions.

As per **claim 37**, claim 37 is rejected for the same reasons as claims 1 and 33. The combining, filtering and subtracting means are inherent to the system for the purpose of combining, filtering, and subtracting the primary and secondary signals as specified in the rejections of claim 33.

As per **claims 2,18,29**, Eppler discloses that the filter is a finite impulse response filter (Col 6 lines 25-36) (Col 7 lines 17-25).

As per **claims 3,19,30**, Eppler's FIR filter is implemented as a linear transversal filter as seen in Fig. 2 (Col 6 lines 38-51) (Col 7 lines 17-25).

As per **claims 6,15,27**, the system of Eppler and Finn inherently comprises a buffer coupled to (FINN: Fig. 1) the adaptive filter 24 via the receive path and amplifier 76 for the purpose of combining the primary and secondary signals as taught by Finn.

As per **claim 8**, In Eppler's echo canceller (Fig. 1) in view of Finn's teachings, the adaptive filter generates an echo estimate of the combined primary and secondary signals. The cancellation of the echo in the near end signal is a function of the estimated echo (Col 6 lines 37-51) (Col 7 lines 17-25).

As per **claim 9**, Eppler's echo canceller further comprises difference operator 20 (Fig. 1) to subtract the echo estimate from the near end (input waveform at terminal 38 in Fig. 1) signal (Col 6 lines 37-51) (Col 7 lines 17-25).

As per **claim 10**, In Eppler's echo canceller the output of difference operator 44 (Fig. 1) is fed-back to the echo canceller as an error signal for filter adaptation (Col 4 lines 20-39) (Col 6 line 65 to Col 7 line 16).

As per **claims 12,23**, the secondary audio system disclosed by Finn, once combined with the far-end signal, will be broadcast from speaker 22 and a portion of the signal will be acoustically coupled to microphone 24 as acoustic echo.

As per **claims 14,17,20,25,28,31** claims rejected for the same reasons as claims 1 and 9.

As per **claim 36**, In Eppler's method the adaptive filtering of the reference signal (the combination of two signals as taught by Finn) comprises generating an estimate of the echo as a function of the transfer function of the electrical (EPPLER: terminals 36, 38 Fig. 1) and acoustical (EPPLER: microphone 12 and speaker 58) echo paths (Col 6 lines 18-37) with echo cancellers 24,46. Additionally, any electrical echo that is not cancelled by canceller 46 will propagate through to canceller 24. As such, the echo estimate generated by canceller 24 will be a function of the electrical echo, with the electrical echo being a function of the electrical echo path.

3. **Claims 13,24**, are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Eppler Jr. et al (5600714) in view of Finn (5706344) as applied to claims 11, 12,22,23.

As per **claims 13,24**, Eppler and Finn disclose claims 11,12,22,23 as noted above, but they do not specify that the secondary audio signal is from a set-top box.

It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of this application that any known device could produce a secondary audio signal, such as a set-top box.

4. **Claims 4,21,32,35,39** rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Eppler et al (5600714) and Finn (5706344) as applied to claims 1,11,33,37,22 above, and further in view of Sih (5732134).

As per **claims 4,21,35,39,32**, Eppler and Finn disclose applicant's echo canceller as per claims 1,11,33,37,22. However, they do not teach the echo canceller comprising double talk logic to control the filter adaptation based upon speech in the near end signal.

Sih teaches an adaptive echo canceller configuration where the far end speech is used as reference signal to cancel echo, a double talk condition will corrupt the echo path estimate unless the coefficient adaptation of the filter is disabled during the double talk (Col 1 lines 52-67). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of this application to include double-talk logic (by detecting speech in both the near and far end) and cease coefficient adaptation in order to prevent the corruption of the echo path estimate.

Art Unit: 2614

5. **Claim 5** rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Eppler et al (5600714) and Finn (5706344) as applied to claim 1 above, and further in view of Sellenslagh et al. (3433898).

As per **claim 5**, Eppler and Finn disclose applicant's echo canceller as per claim

1. However, they do not teach the secondary tone comprising a pulse metering tone.

Sellenslagh teaches that in certain telephony systems, it is desirable to generate pulse metering tones to increment call cost meters (Col 1 lines 29-47). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of this application to include pulse metering as part of the terminal (and part of the secondary signal) for the purpose of controlling toll collection for services rendered to the user of the terminal.

6. **Claims 7,16,26,34,38** rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Eppler et al (5600714) and Finn (5706344) as applied to claims 1,6,11-15,22-25,33,37 above, and further in view of Hasegawa (5905717).

As per **claims 7,16,26,34,38**, Eppler and Finn disclose applicant's echo canceller as per claims 1,6,11-15,22-25,33,37. However, they do not teach including a decimator to downsample the secondary audio signal to match that of the first.

Hasegawa teaches that in an adaptive filter echo canceller, the filter will be required to have a high-speed computation capability unless the rate of the input to the filter is converted (decimated) (Col 1 lines 15-27). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of this application to include a decimator to down

Art Unit: 2614

sample the primary signal, and also for the secondary signal to the same rate for the purpose of reducing the computation capability (and cost) required by the filter.


Response to Arguments

1. Applicant's arguments with respect to **claims 1-39** have been considered but are moot in view of the new ground(s) of rejection.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Alexander Jamal whose telephone number is 571-272-7498. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F 9AM-6PM.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Curtis A Kuntz can be reached on 571-272-7499. The fax phone numbers for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned are **571-273-8300** for regular communications and **571-273-8300** for After Final communications.

AJ
August 21, 2006


CURTIS KUNTZ
PATENT EXAMINER
CENTER 2600